South Africa is a country with a very specific history, much diversity, and significant issues around gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, and health status – including gender-based violence, hate crime and hate speech, and stigmatisation and prejudice around HIV status. It therefore goes without saying that competencies in working with diversity, which include multicultural or cultural competence, are all important.

The term ‘diversity’ includes working with LGBTI+ people, the specific area of application dealt with in the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) practice guidelines for psychology professionals working with sexually and gender-diverse people. The guidelines were developed by PsySSA’s Sexuality and Gender Division (SGD) and forms the basis of an experiential workshop for practitioners working with LGBTI+ people.

The workshop consists of either a three- or four-day experiential intervention that primarily focuses on acquiring knowledge and skills, and, to a lesser extent, also changing attitudes regarding LGBTI+ health and well-being matters. Employing a multi-method approach it includes mini lectures, DVD/video viewing, case studies, facilitated group discussions, role-plays by participants and illustrations by facilitators.

The facilitators rely on psychological theoretical understanding and group work principles when facilitating the process. The method may be described as a ‘soft skill’ or sensitisation training intervention, because of its emphasis on self-awareness. The self-awareness is developed through systemic process- and group interaction during the experiential learning.

The workshops are tailored to the specific needs of the participants and their sponsors, and can include the following components:

- Deepened conceptual understandings of sexual and gender diversity-related terminologies and lived experiences
- Overview of related legal landscape in South Africa
- Overview of related health and social support landscape in South Africa
- Ethical concerns in service provision for LGBTI+ people and their significant others
- In-depth overview of the PsySSA affirmative practice guidelines
- Application to case studies

Contact

Contact Prof Juan Nel on nelja@unisa.ac.za or Fatima Seedat on info@psyssa.com to discuss an intervention for you and your company, or to book for one of our upcoming general workshops.